

## *Models for Masculinity in Colonial and Postcolonial Papua New Guinea*

Wayne Fife

Over the last two decades, feminist and other scholars have been changing the ways researchers think about the social positions of women in the Pacific Islands.<sup>1</sup> In a similar way, masculinity profits from being scrutinized rather than essentialized in the islands. That is particularly true when specific research questions regarding the emergence of social inequalities are addressed. For example, rather than assuming that the social power of men increases in the context of colonial development while treating the social power of women as problematic, it would be more valuable to begin by treating both as if they were unknown.

In this paper I write not about social inequality as such, but about the kinds of models that were initiated within a colonial context for men to be men in what eventually became the country of Papua New Guinea. To paraphrase Clifford Geertz (1973), I focus here primarily on models *for* rather than models *of* masculinity. These models are very different from those within the traditional cultures of both the past and present Papua New Guinea and they have important implications for both gender and class relationships in the contemporary situation of the developing cash economy. Within that context, my focus is limited to the effects larger social and economic changes may have had on the development of models of masculinity. I leave to others the equally important implications this issue has for the micro behavior of men in specific local contexts, as well as the effects that television, video, and radio might have on the creation of ideal male behavior.

I show here that one of the legacies of colonialism and missionization in Papua New Guinea is a hierarchy of masculinity, in which some male personas become considerably more profitable than others, and some

become considerably more problematic. I contend that the development of a missionary-led educational system, and its continuing legacy in the country, has played a major role in the establishment of new moral norms for men. For example, decisions made by missionaries in the early 1900s about whether to follow a primarily industrial or academic model of education in their schools have had a dramatic effect on the kind of model thought to exemplify the contemporary New Guinea male.

In the second section of the paper I draw on examples taken primarily from the London Missionary Society (LMS). As the first mission in Papua New Guinea and as one of the most important of the evangelical missions, the models provided by the society have had a lasting influence on both education and the other mission agencies in that country. One agency of course cannot stand for all, especially for such alternative traditions as the Catholic mission and Seventh-Day Adventists. However, the early London Missionary Society and other missions shared many of the same educational problems. For example, the question of whether to follow an industrial or an academic method of education had to be resolved within most of the missions (Langmore 1989, 158–161).

#### TRADITIONAL MASCULINITY: THE NEXUS OF PERSONAL FORCE AND SOCIAL AUTONOMY

The traditional cultures of Papua New Guinea included a considerable number of ideal roles for men and still do.<sup>2</sup> Some of the better-known roles can be glossed as political leader, peace maker, feast giver, warrior, ritual expert, master artisan, trader, or influential man. Great cultural variations exist in the content of these roles and in the expectations for fulfilling each of them. In one place, a man who wants to be important might be expected to simultaneously fulfill several roles, whereas in other places at least some of these roles can be mutually exclusive or they may be fulfilled in succession over the course of an individual's life cycle. In my opinion, these ideal roles tend to have in common a personal forcefulness that may be defined as the ability to interject oneself into events and affect their outcome in a significant way. For the most part, in Melanesian cultures a man will continue to be recognized as a certain type of role performer by most of his fellow villagers only as long as he remains continuously effective. Only rarely is he considered effective because of the social place he is said to occupy; rather, he must remain effective if he is to con-

tinue to occupy that social place. This is demonstrated by the widespread acceptance of the negative stereotype of what is normally called the rubbish man (*rabis* in Tok Pisin, see Mihalic 1971, 162). The rubbish man is said to be dominated, ineffective, passive, and relatively nonaggressive or even cowardly.<sup>3</sup> This “useless individual” is the opposite of the masculine ideal, that is, of the man who through the force of his personality is able to bend events toward his own desired ends.

A more ambiguous though equally widespread figure is the sorcerer, who in many ways epitomizes masculinity taken to its greatest extension (for overviews, see Zelenietz 1981; Stephen 1987). Whereas the strong man uses his human wiles to bend events in certain directions, not only to gain his own desires but also to look after what he sees as the interests of his kin, his village, his lineage, or his clan, the male sorcerer uses more than human powers to obtain his ends and achieve his vision of sociality.<sup>4</sup> Whether he is thought of as exercising a dangerous though legitimate means to power or displaying a personal aggression that wrongly attempts to abuse power for selfish ends ultimately depends on whether or not he is seen as exercising that power for the benefit of sociality as a whole. As Stephen has suggested, “The double-edged nature of sorcery is very apparent . . . it is a powerful weapon which may be used for the good of the group, or perversely to serve the selfish interests of the individual” (1987, 256). In a more general way, the same could be said of traditional forms of male aggression in Papua New Guinean societies as a whole.

### THE MISSIONIZATION OF MASCULINITY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

From the opening of the first mission in 1871 in the Torres Strait until the present time, missionaries have done their best to counteract these models for masculinity and to present both positive and negative alternatives of their own. The new Christian man was to have few of the features of the old models, at least if missionaries had their way. The older models were said to lead to heathenism and savage violence, practices that were no longer desirable and were to become obsolete under the new colonial order. Many LMS missionaries felt, for example, that if they could not change the ways of those they called Papuans they were dooming them to extinction at the hands of the superior civilization of the white colonizers.

That was one of the chief reasons put forward by those who supported the development of a widespread industrial mission. Without the inculcation of the European form of work habits and the abandonment of old ways, ruin would be inevitable.

It was represented to us [during their deputation's visit] that the future of Papua depends on the training of all its people in habits of industry. There are already signs that without such industry the Papuan will be swallowed up by the tide of European civilization. The old days of fighting are done, and many of the old occupations of the men have ceased entirely. While we suspect that the laziness of the Papuan male has been often exaggerated, we believe that in this matter also the case is proved up to the hilt. (Viner, Williams, and Lenwood 1916, 227)

The industrial model of education, which might be defined as a belief in the efficacy of practical action for the inculcation of "civilized" habits, became of primary importance within the London Missionary Society immediately after the first deputation from the home office in London returned to report their results. In their 1897 report, it was strongly suggested that the most effective schooling would be an industrial one.

it is abundantly clear that, if the natives of New Guinea are to survive their contact with the white man, they must be fitted to take a useful place in the community. There is no reason why they should not become capable and prosperous mechanics if they are rightly taught. Such industrial training would also, if conducted under Christian influences and in connection with a Mission, be likely to exert a powerful moral influence in the formation of character, and in the habits of steady industry. Moreover, under careful and intelligent management, an Industrial Institution might ultimately become of great economical value to the Mission as a whole, and be largely, if not entirely, self-supporting. (Thompson 1897, 81)

These early exhortations of the Reverend RW Thompson were repeated and elaborated upon in the following deputation reports of 1905 and 1908 (King 1905; A Johnson 1908). In them can be found the main reasons used to support an industrial form of education: the rationalization of massive social changes because of the assumed danger of the fatal impact of western contact; the assumptions that the future of New Guinea is and will remain a colonial one and that the role of the indigenous people will necessarily be one of directed workers; a belief in the efficacy of practical work in the formation of good Christian character;



and a desire to offset the costs of the missions and work toward self-sufficiency.

For the purposes of this paper, the second and third reasons are of particular concern. The belief that industrial work could be used to form a new Papuan character has clear implications for what would be accepted by missionaries as public models for masculinity. In the 1905 report the Reverend Joseph King noted what he saw as the crucial need for a new kind of education, one that was tailor-made for the New Guinea situation.

What New Guinea children need, is not so much the book instruction of ordinary schools, as kindergarten object lessons. Education is to them their initiation into a new order of things, and the initiation will be most effectively accomplished by pictorial representations and practical demonstration. And the things which need to be demonstrated are not abstruse problems, but such things as will be daily experiences to them under the new conditions which contact with Western civilisation will bring. . . . In educating New Guineans, our methods must be determined by the occupations which they are likely to pursue as the resources of the country are developed under Anglo-Saxon enterprise. . . . They must be workers, or, like other drones, they will perish, and this fact must be clearly recognised in considering the question of education. As far as may be practicable, there should be some industrial teaching, even in the elementary lessons of the day-school. (King 1905, 21)

According to the Reverend King, the new Papuans had to assume characters that would enable them to become workers under Anglo-Saxon leadership. In other words, to become successful males in this new world, they had to assume many of the characteristic behaviors traditionally ascribed to the rubbish man.

Missionaries understood that such a transformation would not be an easy task. They held out little hope of radically changing already fully formed adults and they felt that as long as Papuan children remained in the hands of their parents and within the "heathen" environment of their home villages there would be little hope for their transformation as well. For this reason many of the very earliest missions set themselves somewhat apart from the villages they served, attempting to create new Christian missions that would serve as a kind of model village for the surrounding peoples (see Langmore 1989). As late as 1916, even as they were beginning to shift from the more complete permanent settlement style of mission to boarding schools and other arrangements, the Rever-

ends Viner, Williams, and Lenwood lauded the beauty of a totally encompassing mission station.

Under what is regarded as the normal system the child is received, trained, and in all probability married to another person on the station; children are born, and these in their turn stay on the station. So the system grows. We should be unjust if we failed to give emphatic testimony to the beauty of the results. Where the system is followed, the Mission station forms an oasis in the middle of what seems to be a very thirsty land. There is a sense of activity about a station, the long training helps to promote a higher measure of ability, and the life of a community with its games, its discipline, and its comparatively keen intellectual interest must be like paradise for those who have the opportunity of dwelling in it. (Viner, Williams, and Lenwood 1916, 215)

They did not mention the paternalism of these stations, in which every person who lived on them was firmly under the guiding hand of the head white missionary and his wife. In this sense, such stations were a metonym for the whole colonial system in Papua New Guinea and the desire for a "trained" Papuan was in a larger sense a desire for a tamed Papua.

The content of the industrial training is equally instructive in terms of models for the new masculinity. Within the stations, males were typically trained in building skills such as carpentry, as well as in plantation work; females were trained in domestic skills such as cooking and even lace making. It was often stated that girls were being trained to take their proper place as the wives of male evangelists or as the house servants of Europeans. A good example of the gendered division of industrial training came from Kerepunu station, where the Reverend Pearse presided. "When speaking to Mr. Pearse of industrial work, he said: 'I teach my [male] students to build houses, mend fences, make boxes; and my wife has taught the girls to make hats, wash, iron, sew, and to act as housemaids'" (King 1905, 30). In the much more elaborate Kwato industrial mission run by the Reverend Charles Abel, males engaged in boatbuilding, sawmilling, and extensive plantation and carpentry work; alongside the usual domestic occupations that preoccupied Europeans, females learned such specialized skills as fancy needlework (eg, King 1905, 31-32; Thompson 1908, 30-42). In addition to these positive examples for a new masculinity based on the skillful transformation of raw materials into utilitarian objects under the guidance of white Europeans, the LMS

missionaries railed against the negative image of what they saw as the old masculinity. As the Reverend Charles Abel stated, "The Papuan is an indolent man to begin with. He is very good at a spurt; he is very lively when he is up to mischief; but his casual occupations are sometimes not only trifling, as when he is decorating himself, but often very evil. The teaching of the precepts of Jesus Christ necessitates the abandoning of these. He must not fight, he must not dance" (quoted in Thompson 1908, 36).

Abel and others like him seem to have recognized the Melanesian ideal of personal forcefulness and hoped to turn it into a more controlled, dominated, and bureaucratically defined work habit. In short, a tamed masculinity would offer the sustained effort of skilled labor, which could then be placed under the control of missionaries or other agents of colonialism. Some of the missionaries were quite overt about their desire to tame Papuans through the glories of manual labor. "We are getting men and women, new creatures in Christ Jesus, who recognise the honour and glory of manual work done as unto the Lord. Manual work has dragged them out of the slough of indolence and idleness native to them; it has brought them to the consciousness that by individual perseverance they can become producers of something of real worth" (Holmes 1917, 4). Like many of the traditional New Guinea forms of masculinity, the LMS style of industrial education favored the celebration of a direct and aggressive intervention and transformation of the physical world, an effective and active style of being male. Unlike them, it did not encourage the development of a sense of personal agency or collective autonomy, but called for a submissive placement within the larger collective agency of European leadership.

At the end of the First World War, there began to be a shift away from an emphasis on industrial education within the London Missionary Society and a reemphasis on a more academic model of schooling. A scholarly model of education had existed alongside the industrial missions from the very beginning and remained even during the period of greatest industrial intensity (late 1890s to 1920). During the earliest periods, it seldom went beyond the very basic literacy skills that were taught for the purpose of offering the local people a more direct access to the Bible and Christian tracts. Most schooling occurred under imported Polynesian teachers, and later the newly trained Papuan evangelists, many of whom had only rudimentary literacy and numeracy skills themselves. Even when taught at the

head stations, Papuans were normally thought to have severely limited abilities to deal with abstract concepts. In a private diary in 1894, the Reverend Dauncey reported an incident that was taken as a typical misunderstanding:

A few days ago I wrote a simple sum like this: Some men went fishing, one caught 10, another 15, another 17, etc., how many fish were there in all? The answer didn't come in due course, and at last I discovered that they had mistaken the sum for a written order to them to go and catch fish, one 10, another 15, and so on, and that they had puzzled themselves greatly over it. We had a good laugh all round, and next time they will know better. (Dauncey 1894, 8)

Even in the 1916 report that resulted in a movement away from the emphasis on industrial education on a larger scale, the members of the LMS head office were reminded of the "limited capacity" of Papuan minds for abstract education. "Speaking generally, it may be said that theoretical subjects of any sort attract little interest and have little educational value. . . . Arithmetic is probably the subject most connected with ordinary life, and when we find therein so serious an incapacity for the simplest form of theory, it may well be guessed how little fitness there is for other forms of purely intellectual exercise" (Viner, Williams, and Lenwood 1916, 212). Scholarly education remained as practically oriented as possible, even as the London Missionary Society and other missions moved away from large-scale industrial schooling toward a more academic model. In the same 1916 report, the authors called for a retention of "concrete" methods of teaching such traditional academic subjects as arithmetic, reading, writing, and geography, alongside a reduced but still important set of industrial activities such as working with machinery (212, 214, 222).

At each station, missionaries had always chosen the most promising of their male students for extra attention and training as native evangelists. Promise was defined by both the personal insight of the missionary and the use of examinations, which began as ad hoc affairs but became more and more organized as schooling developed. By 1937, for example, the colonial government was tying examination results directly to the grants it gave to mission groups to help with educational endeavors (Hurst 1937, 42). Because promotion and higher levels of education became linked to examinations, pressures developed over time for rewarding those Papuans who were most able to participate in increasingly abstract,

academic knowledge, rather than those who were most proficient at mechanical skills. By 1940, members of the London Missionary Society were calling for large-scale government help that would allow the missions to develop a "comprehensive educational system" based on normalized academic standards and centralized teacher training (Goodall 1940, 83).

The implications in terms of models for masculinity are important. While mechanical skills remained highly valued, especially during the period immediately after the Second World War when there was a labor shortage, they slowly began to take second place to the ability to display more abstract skills. Although at this time the colonial Australian government had no intention of placing educated Papua New Guineans in important or even indifferent government positions, more opportunities began to emerge for relatively educated adults to work in rudimentary schooling, missionary evangelism, and as intermediaries for government operations. Even among those who began to work in construction projects to create the colonial towns for Australians to live in, a certain extra status became attached to those who possessed even low-level literacy and numeracy skills.

In short, as colonialism developed along more bureaucratic lines, so did the European-led valuation of masculine virtues. A strong back and a pliable mind were, and to a certain extent remain, valued by Europeans or others in charge of large-scale plantation or mining operations, but missionary educators and at least some colonial administrators elevated those who demonstrated the talent for more abstract skills to a higher level in their often-racist scales for civilized conduct.

This trend became much more pronounced in the 1950s and 1960s, as there came to be increasing pressure from the United Nations and Papua New Guineans to educate them to take over their own country (Downs 1980). During that period a rapidly expanding secondary and eventually tertiary education system was developed; it was linked to massively increased employment opportunities for an elite minority, as Papua New Guineans were "prepared" by the colonial government for independence (see Fife 1992). From 1960 until independence in 1975 there was an explosion of status for the academically educated Papua New Guinean, a status that was tied directly to the possibility of a good job in the emerging cash economy (PNG DOE 1985). The inequalities that arose in such a situation were partly justified through the notion of a mental meritoc-

racy—in which talented individuals, almost exclusively male, were said by both the administration and by the rising indigenous elite to deserve their relatively privileged places. These males were coming to possess what I would define as a bureaucratic forcefulness, an ability to enter into and influence events toward their own ends because of their placement along the emerging grid of bureaucratic power.<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, as jobs began to open up for educated Papua New Guineans in largely foreign-controlled capitalist enterprises, some men began to gain a forcefulness based on the prestige of being a part of the manipulation of the natural world in the pursuit of wealth rather than of subsistence—that is, a capitalistic forcefulness. Both of these forms of masculinity were more in tune with the needs of the state and emerging capitalism than with the desire for local autonomy.

One last attempt was made in the late 1960s to turn education back along the path of practical endeavor. At that time, a number of people responsible for schooling began to feel that the existing primary system, which had been set up largely by Australian and European missionaries and administrators, would not be capable of meeting the needs of an independent country (Lancy 1979). It was proposed that primary schools be “localized” by turning them into community schools. The original goal was for each community school to serve as a hamlet, village, or town “meeting place” and resource center (see Kemelfield 1976). The center would be a focal point for educational gatherings that would involve both children and adults. Along with basic literacy and numeracy, children would be exposed to the more directly practical kinds of knowledge they would need to live in their home communities. After five pilot projects and a series of meetings, the goals were watered down somewhat, separating adult from children’s education and placing children in primary-like schools that would have “a greater community orientation” (Lancy 1979, 1–2). Several days a week were to be spent outside the classrooms, engaging in community projects and acquiring traditional customs and skills. Considerable hostility was expressed by parents toward this arrangement, because many felt their children would be shut out of a more active participation in the emerging cash economy without a more normalized academic education (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979, 201). Teachers, too, dragged their feet in its implementation. During the 1970s, actual educational practice generally involved teachers developing a small program of “cultural activities,” which they built around a standard aca-

demic curriculum (Smith, Carss, and Power 1979, 2). By 1983, Mark Bray called the community-school movement an almost total failure, noting that changes from the older primary orientation were limited to first, the name—primary schools were now called community schools; second, some parts of the curriculum had become more locally relevant (eg, texts contained more stories about Papua New Guinean children and fewer about Australian children); and third, most schools now had parent-teacher associations along with a local board of management (Bray 1983).

### THE POST-INDEPENDENCE MODEL: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

By the time of independence in 1975, an elite system of secondary and tertiary education was producing such a significant number of higher school graduates<sup>6</sup> that it quickly led to educational inflation, whereby good government or cash economy jobs that did not depend on skilled or semiskilled physical labor began to require higher and higher educational credentials (PNG DOE 1985; Fife 1992). A four-tiered system of male participation in the cash economy has developed, each including specific models for masculinity: first, a top tier of relatively well educated and urbane<sup>7</sup> Papua New Guinea males who are equally at home in government offices, banks, schools, or the other institutional forms of a post-colonial nation; second, an emerging rural elite made up of entrepreneurs who amass wealth largely through the manipulation of “traditional” social relationships, but who at the same time want to pass their advantages along to their children in the form of educational credentials as well as capital; a third tier made up mainly of skilled workers, many with at least rudimentary literacy, who take their places in well-paid mining or construction jobs, as well as petty commodity producers within the context of larger agricultural development projects; and a fourth tier of unskilled laborers, most of whom live in rural villages and can only participate in the cash economy through low-paying intermittent wage labor opportunities and small-scale commodity production.

Although certain models predominate within each tier, newer and older models of masculinity can be found throughout all four tiers, and the exact status assigned to different norms depends on the person doing the assigning, as well as the context of assessment. Here, I look at each of these situations of masculine performance primarily from the viewpoint



of the new urban elite. I choose this position because it is in many ways a reflection of what Papua New Guinean males can expect in their futures in terms of the relative advantages or disadvantages of following different models of masculinity for participating in the developing cash economy.

From this point of view, the top of the hierarchy can be symbolized by the almost exclusively male elected officials and higher or middle level public servants. While the latter qualify for their jobs primarily because of their educational credentials, the former come from a more mixed background that in the beginning included large numbers of men with little or no formal education. However, as Patricia Johnson has recently shown, the chance of becoming a nationally elected government official has increasingly been correlated with the attainment of significant formal education (1993, 185–188). When I conducted research in town areas in West New Britain in 1986–87, many younger adults whom I knew suggested that only more educated Papua New Guineans could do a proper job of running the provincial and national governments, an attitude that is likely to become more widespread as time goes on. During the same period, a number of letters to the editor and stories in the newspapers suggested that many younger people who aspire to a job in the cash economy are starting to find educational inflation a considerable burden on their aspirations. Two young men from the national capital district, for example, wrote to the *Post-Courier* stating, “Every time I see a job of a kind suited to my qualifications advertised in the newspapers, I apply but get no response. I sometimes go personally and talk with the personnel officers and when they ask for my certified references, I show them. I even get interviews at the same time, but in the end I get no responses or otherwise ill responses” (31 Oct 1986, 4).

The young people I knew seldom blamed educational inflation for the emerging problem of unemployment among those who thought they had obtained significant credentials. Most often, blame was placed on some aspect of what these youths saw as the backward practices of traditional masculinity. The young men quoted, for example, suggested that the reason they could not find employment was that recruitment officers only wanted to give the jobs to their own *wantoks* (literally, speakers of the same mother-tongue; figuratively, co-villagers, clan-members, and so on). In another letter to the *Post-Courier*, a different man stated that as “most politicians send their children to International Schools or directly to Australia,” they no longer care about maintaining an adequate public school

system in Papua New Guinea (23 May 1986, 4). He went on to suggest that "our political masters see in education a fundamental threat to their high salaries, free houses, trips abroad, free cars and the like. An informed electorate would see them for what they are—the last vestige of the rigid tribal structure which has enchained us for centuries." This kind of small-arms fire seems to be signaling the beginnings of, if not outright class warfare, then at least class antagonism in Papua New Guinea.

Similar frustrations are experienced by those who attempt to gain direct employment in one of the relatively rare commercial jobs or in the middle levels of the government bureaucracy. The frustration is all the more acute if one is female or a male of less than higher school standing. The newspapers in the 1980s were full of stories about frustrated youths attempting to obtain what they viewed as desirable jobs within the framework of the developing country. A particularly ironic story appeared in the *Times of Papua New Guinea*, which told the story of four young men (three were twenty years old, one nineteen) who went to a police recruiting office, but "ended up on the wrong side of the law" for fraudulently altering their grade-ten school certificates to accord with the requirements for employment in the police force (31 May 1986, 7). In the towns of West New Britain where I worked, it was common knowledge that many of the leaders of the so-called *raskal* gangs that operated in and around urban areas were relatively well-educated and intelligent young men who had become extremely discontented with the lack of opportunities for them and their friends in the new Papua New Guinea. It was said that they felt that the promise of well-paying jobs had not been kept and were determined to take matters into their own hands, rather than retire to what they saw as failure and the lesser life of the rural villages.<sup>8</sup>

The above suggests that these young men are attempting to draw on older male ideals of the warrior and leader in an inappropriate setting and without the normal context of the village and rural life to give it meaning. In other words, they are trying to assert personal forcefulness in a situation where it cannot be connected in an acceptable way to sociality and in situations that bring them into direct competition with the powers of state institutions.

In this first tier, then, relatively successful performance in the developing economy and access to its rewards depend most on the correct manipulation of bureaucratic or capitalistic forcefulness, or both, a relational conjunction often found in contemporary Papua New Guinea. Bureau-

cratic forcefulness is strongly tied to educational credentials obtained through a missionary-created schooling system, while capitalistic forcefulness is less directly dependent on credentials as such, but nevertheless strongly associated with the skills (such as higher numeracy) associated with successful completion of many years of schooling.

In the second tier, a successful performance as an entrepreneur in the rural arena depends far more on the ability to manipulate traditional forms of masculine power in the appropriate cultural contexts than on educational or other credentials. It involves leaders who have made use of what seem to be traditional styles of leadership to secure new places in the developing economy for themselves, their families, and to perhaps a lesser extent their followers. In such situations, the older forms of personal forcefulness at the service of sociality often become exaggerated to an extent that was probably unknown in the past. This hypertrophied masculinity helps lead to more substantial differences in wealth than were also likely possible in the past. Many of the more successful leaders would like to pass on such differences to their sons, and to a certain extent their daughters, in the form of capital and higher school-leaver certificates or a tertiary education.

Taking the first two tiers together, the following of hypertrophied personal, bureaucratic, and capitalistic models for masculinity by a successful minority threatens to help create substantial class differences in Papua New Guinea over the next few generations. And, as Max Weber remarked for a different time and place (1948, 240-244), educational credentials will be used as a form of gatekeeping in attempts to exclude others from obtaining the same advantages for themselves and their families in the new Papua New Guinea. This gatekeeping will affect most women and large numbers of men, and will simultaneously become rationalized as a logical outcome of a mental meritocracy. That ideal had its beginnings in the missionization of masculinity through the social emasculation of the majority of males and the almost total exclusion of females through an extension of the colonialist ideals of academic education.

A third tier involves skilled workers who participate on a more or less permanent basis (ie, not seasonally or for a fixed short-term contract) in the large development projects, including mining, construction, and agricultural commodity production for the world market. Unlike the rural entrepreneurs, this group has little or no control over the means of production. Many men who work in these industries have limited or even

no educational credentials. Formal education, however, substantially increases an individual's chances of being promoted or given jobs that require even rudimentary literacy or numeracy skills. It is also an important factor in the success or failure of smallholders involved in such development schemes as the large oil-palm projects in West New Britain Province.

Male effectiveness in these situations is encouraged to flourish only under the firmly guiding hands of the proper authorities. Unlike the rural entrepreneurs, these men pay for their participation in the cash economy by forgoing the exercise of many forms of traditional masculinity. The model outlined here is one of a dominated masculinity, mildly accepting its role under the new elite order. However far from the truth this is in reality—and numerous protests among the smallholders and “disturbances” among the workers suggest that this model is often disregarded or held in disrepute—the man who successfully holds onto a position as a skilled and relatively well-paid worker or commodity producer within the cash economy finds himself under constant pressure to conform to the model. A glance through the Papua New Guinea newspapers or a discussion with an upper echelon bureaucrat will rapidly confirm how consistently workers' or smallholders' behaviors are judged in accordance with their acceptance or rebellion against a missionized norm of a dominated masculinity.<sup>9</sup> Oil-palm company managers and government officers in West New Britain, for example, often complain about what they see as the ingratitude of the oil-palm block smallholders, who have largely been brought in from other regions of the country and “given” ninety-nine-year leases on their plots. These smallholders often complain or threaten to strike over what they see as unfair prices for their oil-palm product and the requirements for selling certain quotas to the company and maintaining their plots in specific ways regardless of the returns available to them in a given period. At the same time, the relative lack of local participation in these projects (see Valentine and Valentine 1979), and the fact that many of the leaseholders come from interior highland areas of the main island, have led to numerous “clashes” between smallholders and members of local landholding groups or the local police force. The local people often blame these clashes on what they see as the smallholders' “backwardness.” Many coastal and small island people in Papua New Guinea stereotype inland peoples from the main island of New Guinea as “violent” and ignorant “savages” and suggest that they are less fit to participate in the developing economy than the more “sophisticated” coastal

people (especially those who live in or near urban centers). In other words, the differences in economic access to the cash economy are partly becoming essentialized as differences between civilized and backward models for masculinity. Similar though not identical forms of essentialization have occurred among the groups involved in the recent violent encounters over the Bougainville mining project (eg, Standish 1989; Robie 1989; Oliver 1991) and in the Pacific as a whole with regard to the issue of what might be termed a new racism (Keesing 1989, 27).

The last tier concerns men who usually live in rural villages and work intermittently as unskilled or semiskilled laborers, either in construction or other urban jobs or as rural plantation workers under limited-term contracts. Historically, these have been young men and among many of the societies of Papua New Guinea such work has taken on the overtones of becoming part of their initiation into adulthood (eg, Lacey 1983). In the past, they were often "sold" into indentured labor by their elder kin, and on their return home their earnings were confiscated by the most important men in the kin group. Today, they are still encouraged by others to leave home in order to bring cash and desired commodities back to the villages, and there continues to be a great deal of strain over who will control their earnings. As these young men have not yet obtained any appreciable masculine status in their home groups, the results are usually a foregone conclusion. When they are working, they are invited to participate even more fully than third-tier workers in a dominated model for masculinity, being required to largely submerge their desires for traditional styles of personal forcefulness until later in their lives, when they can be taken up again in the more appropriate context of their home villages. Unlike those in the first-tier groups, these individuals generally have few academic credentials and therefore no access to alternate models for either bureaucratic or capitalistic forcefulness.

In contemporary Papua New Guinea, formal education has been almost fully dominated by an academic model. The industrial model has never fully disappeared, but it has been relegated to the sidelines as a second-class form of schooling intended for those who cannot succeed in the more prestigious academic system (eg, Bray and Smith 1985). Even those men who participate in the developing economy as part of the second, third, and fourth tiers, and who secure a measure of both primary and industrial education, will still be seen as displaying inferior forms of masculinity by many of those who participate as first-tier elites.

## A CONTEMPORARY MALE AND THE CONFUSION OF MODELS

The reality of being a male in present-day Papua New Guinea can be and often is considerably more confusing than the simple tier model suggests. Individual men may participate simultaneously in more than one of the arenas, and many become confused about just where their own "credentials" place them as men in terms of both their responsibilities and their desires, as I shall briefly illustrate with a short narrative about a young man I knew well in West New Britain.

Mark was one of the first individuals I met after I moved into one of the towns of West New Britain. He was twenty-three years old when I knew him, a neighbor who expressed a great deal of interest in my educational research. It soon became apparent that he hoped I would hire him as a research assistant. Being on a limited grant, I lacked the money to hire anyone for a standard wage and the best I could do was pay him now and again to help me translate some of my tape-recorded Tok Pisin material into English. My initial impressions were that he was a very talented though frustrated young man. Eventually, I got to know more about different pieces of his life.

Both his mother and father were Nakanai from West New Britain. His father worked for a health office in the government for a number of years, which meant that Mark moved around the province a great deal as a child. In addition, his parents divorced while he was still young. One of six children, he ended up being raised after the age of six primarily by an aunt and then by his grandmother on his mother's side. His father never remarried, although his mother divorced twice, remarrying each time.

As a child, Mark was so anxious to begin his education that at the age of six he used to follow older children to the village school in the morning and then back home after school so that he could pretend to his younger siblings that he was being educated. Enrolled at the age of seven, he told me he was devoted to school from the first, never complaining to anyone, for example, when the teachers beat him. "I just keep it to myself. And I think that's one thing that makes me want to try, to correct all my mistakes myself, you know." He received good grades and was selected to go on to receive a secondary education. "When I was chosen to go to high school, I wasn't really surprised. After my parents got divorced, . . . I don't have no father or mother to rely on, you know. So, since grade one, two, you know, I really put everything into school. When I feel sick, I



don't feel like, you know, missing one day off." He went on to graduate successfully from one of the few and very prestigious grade-twelve national high schools in the country. Like many of his fellow graduates from these schools, he was marked for a university education. He entered the University of Papua New Guinea, beginning science courses, but leaving after several months of the first year. "I left mostly because of my family problems. That was the year my mother, you know, decided to get another divorce. It makes me really worried, so I just walk around Rabaul. I didn't want to come home and see them, so . . ." He worked for a while in the Rabaul area, meeting his future wife, Sarah, during that year. Even though they were from the same village, their parents were not very happy about their relationship in the beginning, although eventually they came to accept it. They were married in the early 1980s. Sarah, who had graduated from a grade-ten high school and then gone on to complete teachers' college, now taught at one of the local high schools.

At the time I knew Mark, he was moving back and forth between town and what he considered to be his home village in order to plant coconuts for cash cropping on a piece of land that had been his grandfather's and was passed on to him. When I first met him, he and Sarah had just had their first baby, who was now a few months old. He talked often about either going back to the university or getting a job in the developing economy, but nothing seemed to work out. Later in the year, he admitted to me that he found the relatively free-wheeling atmosphere of the university not to his liking; he much preferred an educational environment where the teachers displayed firm discipline and gave their students strict instructions about how to go about their work.

One day, after Mark and his wife had gone to his home area to plant some coconuts during a short school holiday, the Australian headmaster who was in charge of the school where Sarah worked ran into me in the town. As coincidence would have it, we had recently argued about what he viewed as the lack of potential displayed by Papua New Guineans for living up to Australian standards for civilized conduct. Triumphantly he said to me, "Do you know what your good friend has just done? I just got a phone call. He has beaten up his wife so badly that she cannot come back to the school to teach for two weeks! So much for your argument."

I was shocked by this turn of events. Although I knew that domestic violence was common in the country (eg, Toft and Bonnell 1985; Toft 1985; Counts 1990), I never thought my soft-spoken, well-educated friend, who seemed not at all like the more aggressive males I had often met,



would ever do such a thing. Although the story was exaggerated, it was true. Several days later the family returned to town, and Sarah had several small visible bruises on her face and shoulders. Mark appeared sheepish, and in explaining why he had not returned to work on some translation on Monday as promised, he stated that they had not been able to come back because "Sarah had been a little ill." Over the next few months, I noticed that he was a particularly attentive husband and father and spent considerably more time around the house helping out with the chores than he had in the past.

I suggest that there are two victims here. The greater victim of course is Sarah. A hard-working and gentle woman, she brought a considerable income to her family through her teaching while taking good care of them. Even by the local standards that often excused wife-beating "if she deserved it," Sarah had done nothing to trigger Mark's violence.

The lesser victim is Mark himself. His insecure masculinity is, it seems to me, fed by a developing cultural situation in which the family members who had invested much time and money into his education expected him to succeed through the attainment of a well-paid job in the cash economy. Disappointed by his inability to thrive in the university environment, this man, who had never before failed in an educational context, was also under pressure from his wife's family. They had agreed to a marriage with the understanding that he, like Sarah, was going to complete a useful tertiary education and use it to enmesh himself firmly in the developing economy.

Although very well educated by Papua New Guinean standards, Mark did not seem confident of his ability to take on the upper-class mantle of either bureaucratic or capitalistic forcefulness that was expected of him; at the same time he was precluded by his relative youth and outsider status from having any real hope of being allowed the status of personal forcefulness at the service of sociality in his home area. Despite his education, he was less than a full man by either of these standards, while his wife was not only succeeding in the cash economy, but had recently affirmed local standards of womanhood by giving birth to their child.

## CONCLUSIONS: MASCULINITY IN A POSTCOLONIAL COUNTRY

When missionaries helped determine the development of an educational system that became dominated by academic rather than industrial models of schooling, they also helped create the beginnings of a new hierarchy of

masculinity, both within and outside the cultural traditions of colonialism. In the early industrial model, a subjugated masculinity was favorably contrasted with the older "heathen" models of personal forcefulness. With the emphasis on academic education, Papua New Guineans were presented with newer models of either bureaucratic or capitalistic forcefulness, both of which came to be seen as superior forms for displaying the virtues of being a man than the more overtly dominated models of less educated workers or the older models of personal forcefulness at the service of sociality. Within these models, not only were women offered very little in the way of personal attainment,<sup>10</sup> but most men were relegated to the status of second-rate males. That is in sharp contrast to previous traditional situations, in which only a small minority of males were assumed to be in such an inferior social position, and it is a direct reflection of the development of newer class-based cultural traditions by the new urban elite.

As the example of Mark shows, not all members of this new elite are fully comfortable with the norms of the new masculinity. The reality of experience has a tendency to overflow the boundaries offered by competing cultural norms. However, individuals and groups can and do make use of these norms—as the new rural entrepreneurial elite does even while manipulating old relationships for new ends, or the members of the new urban elite do whenever they use the notion of a mental meritocracy to justify their privileged social and economic positions in the emerging nation.

\*

\*

\*

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK *the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* for doctoral awards for the years 1985 to 1987, as well as a postdoctoral award covering 1993 to 1995. This generous support made it possible for me to carry out the ethnographic research in the province of West New Britain in 1986–1987, as well as the archival research during 1994, on which this article is based. Special thanks to the people of West New Britain, the government of Papua New Guinea, and the librarians at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London—all could not have been more helpful. An earlier and much shorter version of this paper was delivered under the title "Models for Masculinity: The London Missionary Society and Industrial versus Academic Education in Early Papua" at the American Anthropological Association meetings, 30 November 1994, in Atlanta, Georgia. My thanks to Dr Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi and Dr Jeanette Dickerson-Putman for organizing the session "Men

*and Development in the Pacific: A More Critical Assessment” and especially to Professor Andrew Strathern for his perceptive comments in his role as discussant for that session. Last, I would like to express my gratitude to my spouse and colleague, Dr Sharon Roseman, for her honest criticisms of my interpretations. All final responsibility for the text of course remains with myself.*

## Notes

1 For example, AWeiner 1976; 1992; O'Brien and Tiffany 1984; Sexton 1986; MStrathern 1988; Errington and Gewertz 1989; Jolly and Macintyre 1989.

2 See Schieffelin 1976; AWeiner 1976; Keesing 1978; Herdt 1982; AStrathern 1982; Godelier 1986; JWeiner 1988; Herdt and Stoller 1990; Gewertz and Errington 1991; Pomponio 1992; Knauff 1993; Maschio 1994.

3 See AWeiner 1976; Gewertz 1983; Herdt and Stoller 1990; Pomponio 1992; AStrathern 1982.

4 The term *sociality* refers to a tendency to form social groups or communities. I use it throughout this paper in preference to either of the terms *society* or *sociability*. *Society* implies a much more closed social formation than the process I refer to, and *sociability* is concerned with individual behavior alone rather than with an individual who is actively effecting group formation.

5 I was inspired in this metaphor by Andrew Strathern's (1984) notion of “a line of power,” which in turn was influenced by the words of the big-man Ongka. To stretch the metaphor, if each village or area can be said to be connected to the central government by a line of power, then the bureaucratic spider web of power that emits from governmental positions can be said to form a grid of power.

6 Students may leave secondary school with either a high school diploma (grade ten or grade twelve, depending on the context) or a grade eight leaver's certificate.

7 This group is strongly tied to the emergence of what I have called a new urban consciousness (see Fife 1994).

8 For a similar portrait of *raskals* in New Ireland, see Sykes 1994.

9 For the way contemporary schools promote this norm, see Fife 1994.

10 In an interesting parallel, and for the way contemporary Papua New Guinean male authors tend to disparage women who try to be too “modern,” see Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993).

## References

- Bray, Mark  
 1983 Community Schools or Primary Schools? *Yagl-Ambu* 10: 35-44.
- Bray, Mark, and Peter Smith, editors  
 1985 *Education and Social Stratification in Papua New Guinea*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Counts, Dorothy, editor  
 1990 *Domestic Violence in Oceania*. Special Issue of *Pacific Studies* 13 (3).
- Dauncey, Reverend Harry Moore  
 1894 An Amusing Misunderstanding, Diary Extracts, Papua Personals, Box 2, no. 4. LMS Collection, University of London.
- Downs, Ian  
 1980 *The Australian Trusteeship of Papua New Guinea 1945-1975*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Errington, Frederick, and Deborah Gewertz  
 1989 *Cultural Alternatives and a Feminist Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fife, Wayne  
 1992 *A Certain Kind of Education*. PhD thesis, Department of Anthropology, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.  
 1994 Education in Papua New Guinea: The Hidden Curriculum of a New Moral Order. *City and Society Annual Review*, 139-162.
- Geertz, Clifford  
 1973 *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gewertz, Deborah B  
 1983 *Sepik River Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gewertz, Deborah B, and Frederick K Errington  
 1991 *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Godelier, Maurice  
 1986 *The Making of Great Men*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodall, Reverend Norman  
 1940 *Report: After a Secretarial Visit to the Pacific*. London: London Missionary Society. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Griffin, James, Hank Nelson, and Stewart Firth  
 1979 *Papua New Guinea*. Melbourne, VIC: Heinemann Educational Australia.
- Herd, Gilbert H, editor  
 1982 *Rituals of Manhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Herd, Gilbert H, and Robert J Stoller  
 1990 *Intimate Communications*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Holmes, J H

- 1917 *Namau Report 1917*. Box 3, folder 1. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Hurst, Reverend H Leonard

- 1937 *Report: After a Secretarial Visit to Papua*. Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Committee, London Missionary Society. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Johnson, Reverend A N

- 1908 *Report: Deputation to New Guinea*. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Johnson, Patricia Lyons

- 1993 Education and the "New" Inequality in Papua New Guinea. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 24(3): 183-204.

Jolly, Margaret, and Martha Macintyre, editors

- 1989 *Family and Gender in the Pacific*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keesing, Roger

- 1978 *Elota's Story*. New York: St Martin's Press.  
1989 Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific. *The Contemporary Pacific* 1: 19-42.

Kemelfield, Graeme

- 1976 Planting the Seed: A Proposal for Community-Based Education. In *Papua New Guinea Education*, edited by EB Thomas, 1: 226-253. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

King, Reverend Joseph

- 1905 *New Guinea Mission Report*. London: Mission House, for the London Missionary Society. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies Library, University of London.

Knauft, Bruce M

- 1993 *South Coast New Guinea Cultures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lacey, Rod

- 1983 "Our Young Men Snatched Away." Occasional Paper in Economic History 3. Port Moresby: History Department, University of Papua New Guinea.

Lancy, David F

- 1979 Introduction to Special Issue on Community Schools. *Papua New Guinea Journal of Education* 15: 1-25.

Langmore, Diane

- 1989 *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874-1914*. Pacific Islands Monograph Series 6. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Maschio, Thomas

- 1994 *To Remember the Faces of the Dead*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Mihalic, F

- 1971 *The Jacaranda Dictionary and Grammar of Melanesian Pidgin*. Brisbane: Jacaranda Press.

O'Brien, Denise, and Sharon W Tiffany, editors

- 1984 *Rethinking Women's Roles*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Oliver, Douglas

- 1991 *Black Islanders: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville 1937-1991*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

PNG DOE, Papua New Guinea Department of Education

- 1985 *Growth of Education Since Independence 1975-1985*. Port Moresby: Department of Education.

Pomponio, Alice

- 1992 *Seagulls Don't Fly into the Bush*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Robie, David

- 1989 Bougainville: One Year Later. *Pacific Islands Monthly* 59 (22): 10-18.

Schieffelin, Edward L

- 1976 *The Sorrow of the Lonely and the Burning of the Dancers*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Sexton, Lorraine

- 1986 *Mothers of Money, Daughters of Coffee*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Smith, Richard, Brian W Carss, and Colin N Power

- 1979 The Primary School and the Community in Papua New Guinea. *Papua New Guinea Journal of Education* 15: 104-119.

Standish, Bill

- 1989 *Bougainville: Undermining the State in Papua New Guinea*. Background paper, Legislative Research Service, Parliament of Australia. Canberra: Legislative Research Service.

Stephen, Michele

- 1987 Contrasting Images of Power. In *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*, edited by Michele Stephen, 249-304. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Strathern, Andrew, editor

- 1982 *Inequality in New Guinea Highlands Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- 1984 *A Line of Power*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Strathern, Marilyn

- 1988 *The Gender of the Gift*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sykes, Karen M

- 1994 What Do Raskals Want? Paper presented at American Anthropological Association meetings, Atlanta, Georgia, 30 November to 4 December.

Thompson, Reverend R W

- 1897 *Report of the Deputation to New Guinea and South Seas*. London: Alexander and Shephard, for the London Missionary Society. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- 1908 *The Industrial Branch of Mission Work*. London: London Missionary Society. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Toft, Susan, editor

- 1985 *Domestic Violence in Papua New Guinea*. Monograph 3. Port Moresby: Law Reform Commission.

Toft, Susan, and Susanne Bonnell

- 1985 *Marriage and Domestic Violence in Rural Papua New Guinea*. Occasional Paper 18. Port Moresby: Law Reform Commission.

Valentine, C A, and Betty Lou Valentine

- 1979 Nakanai: Villagers, Settlers, Workers and the Hoskins Oil Palm Project. In *Going Through Changes*, 49-71. Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.

Viner, Reverend A J, Reverend G J Williams, and Reverend Frank Lenwood

- 1916 *Report: Deputation to the South Seas and Papua*. London: London Missionary Society. LMS Collection, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Weber, Max

- 1948 *From Max Weber*, edited by H H Gearth and C Wright Mills. London: Routledge.

Weiner, Annette B

- 1976 *Women of Value, Men of Renown*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- 1992 *Inalienable Possessions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weiner, James

- 1988 *The Heart of the Pearl Shell*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zelenietz, Martin

- 1981 Sorcery and Social Change: An Introduction. *Social Analysis* 8: 3-14.

Zimmer-Tamakoshi, Laura

- 1993 Passion, Poetry, and Cultural Politics in the South Pacific. Paper presented at American Anthropological Association meetings in Washington, DC, 17-21 November.



*Abstract*

This paper discusses the kinds of models that became available in the colonial context for indigenous men to be men in what eventually became the country of Papua New Guinea. One of the legacies of colonialism and the missionization of masculinity is the development of a new hierarchy of masculine values. These newer norms are in marked contrast to older forms of male effectiveness, and they have helped to define social distinctions within contemporary Papua New Guinea. At the same time, the reality of human behavior spills over the confines of both older and newer cultural norms, and the results can be confusing for individual males. However, individual confusion does not affect the overall saliency of these historically engendered forms of masculinity, nor the importance they may have for the justification of emerging social and economic inequalities within the country.

**KEYWORDS:** masculinity, missionization, colonialism, social class, education, Papua New Guinea